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Judgment: Human and Divine

Rev. George Jackson, B.A.

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BY THE REV.

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OTHERS' JUDGMENT OF US

HUMAN judgment is a subject of which it is scarcely possible to speak without appearing to fall into occasional paradoxes and self-contradictions, because it is only from different, and sometimes opposite, points of view that the whole truth concerning it can be told.

Our judgments of each other are always imperfect. They are often careless, ignorant, and unjust. They are sometimes spiteful, cruel, wicked. And yet, notwithstanding this, human judgment is an inevitable accompaniment of human life. Faulty and

imperfect as it is, it must still go on. It need not be, it ought not to be, such as, alas! it too often is; but in some form or other it must always be. We cannot help ourselves; whether we will or no, we are compelled to form our opinion, to pass our judgment on the words, the acts, the characters of those who are about us. Go to a great political gathering of either party, and you will hear the conduct of public men, individually and collectively, subjected to the severest and most searching criticism. Take up any one of our innumerable daily papers, and through column after column of its leading articles you will find the actions of men of all ranks and classes passed in review and adjudged with the utmost confidence, and sometimes with the utmost recklessness. And in each case the judgment of speaker or of writer is straightway caught up and re-echoed by listening or by reading thousands, or, if rejected, it is only to

substitute for it some other judgment equally emphatic and equally fallible. Nay, we have but to listen to what goes on at our own table and by our own fireside to realise that, as Dean Church says, "from morning to night we are all of us passing judgment, not here and there, or now and then, but all day long and everywhere, as a matter of course." Indeed, what is that that we call "public opinion" but just the swelling of these innumerable private and individual judgments into one mighty flood, so potent for good or for ill as we know it to be? And mark—and this is one of those paradoxes to which I referred a moment ago—He who said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," He it is who more than any other has created that rushing stream, has banked its turbulent waters, and is to-day guiding it into wise and safe channels. So that this exercise of human judgment we see to be—to quote Dean Church again—"a

part of the necessary system of the world;" without it, in its many forms, "the world could not go on."

But if this is so, a very important practical question arises: What ought to be our attitude towards that ever and everywhere present fact of human judgment? How ought we to treat the verdicts of that court—a court which knows no adjournment and which is continually passing its judgments upon the lives of us all?

There is one answer to our question—and at first sight it appears a very defiant answer—in the words of St. Paul: "With me," he said, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment . . . he that judgeth me is the Lord;" which seems as if the Apostle were trampling the judgment of his fellows scornfully beneath his feet. But let us carefully distinguish: the words I have just quoted are the answer of an Apostle, loyal to his conscience and his Lord,

turning from the babble of human tongues to await in silence the judgment of his conscience and his God: "He that judgeth me is the Lord." But they *might* be the answer of a hardened evildoer, the brazen indifference of a moral outlaw. The truth is, as a moment's reflection will show, disregard of the opinion of others may spring from motives of an exactly opposite character: it may spring from motives the highest and purest, or from motives the meanest and basest. A man may resolve to brave the adverse judgment of his fellows because

> He hears a voice they cannot hear,
> Which says he must not stay;
> He sees a hand they cannot see,
> Which beckons him away;

or he may do it because he has learned to bow before no higher law than how he may serve and please himself. So that obviously St. Paul's answer is not, and was not meant to be, a complete answer to our question; and one

does not need to go beyond the words of the Apostle himself to show its incompleteness. To the Christians at Rome he wrote: "Let not your good be evil spoken of," which being interpreted means, "Take heed not only *what* ye do, but *how* ye do it. Consider how it will look from another's point of view." So again he bade the Colossians, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without," which is but another way of saying, "Take care what other people think; and when you deal with men who do not serve the master that you serve, have the greater care." A man is not free from the law of circumspection because he is a Christian; rather is he the more firmly bound to obey it. A bishop, the Apostle told Timothy, "must have good testimony from them that are without;" and writing to the same Church whose judgment concerning himself he said he held so lightly, he nevertheless declared that it was his

desire, by manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Now what does all this mean but that Paul knew that human judgment, or "public opinion," has a very great —may we not say a divinely-appointed —work to do in human life? As Canon Liddon once said: "It acts in the world of thought and conduct as does the policeman in the streets; it is there to keep outward order," to support and direct that which is just and good, to brand and confound that which is evil.

On the entrance hall of the Marischal College, Aberdeen, may be read this quaint old motto: "Thay haif said: Quhat say thay: Lat thame say." Now there are times, as we shall see in a moment, when that is the right, the necessary spirit. But let us make no mistake. Habitually to ignore and set at nought what other people think *may* be as foolish and as fatal as

habitually to consult and wait upon it. *Athanasius contra mundum*—it is a magnificent phrase, and it stands for a great truth; but I fear it has to answer for a good deal of stupid and obstinate wrongheadedness which does not always get called by its proper name.

But—and now I come to the truth to which Paul's words give such emphatic expression—the peril for most of us does not lie that way, but rather in a tame subservience, a too ready compliance with the ways and thoughts of the world about us. Find me one man who, to use a homely figure, gets the bit between his teeth and goes his own course, heedless and careless of what other people say or think, and I will find you ten men, all properly bridled and bitted, who can be turned hither or thither, this way or that, just as the great driving public wills. The children of Mr. Pliable are everywhere to-day, in business, in politics, and in the Church, bowing and

pleasant and smiling, anxious to be on the best of terms with everybody, but poor, supple, weak-kneed creatures who dare not call their souls their own, and to whom other men's favour is as the very breath of their nostrils. Is there anything that we need more in every department of life to-day than that spirit of sturdy, uncompromising independence which breathes through these words of the Apostle: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment; he that judgeth me is the Lord"? We want men, like him, who fear God and who have no other fear. Again I say, we are not called to be Ishmaels, our hand against every man and every man's hand against us; but a man should be a man, and not a jelly-fish. It is right to be influenced by the judgment of others; it is not right, it is wholly wrong, and in the long run it is utterly ruinous, to bow in all things before that tribunal.

Let me illustrate what I have been saying by two examples, one on the one side and one on the other, and both from our English political history. Take first the case of the famous Francis Bacon. Bacon's greatness on its intellectual side it is almost impossible to exaggerate. It was his proud, and by no means empty boast that he had taken all knowledge to be his province. Such a vision of truth, such power to comprehend and to speak it, have rarely been granted to any man. In sheer intellectual might he stands, in our nation at least, with the one exception of Shakespeare, without a peer. And yet, notwithstanding all his magnificent gifts, we see him stooping to almost incredible meanness and perfidy, suffering himself to become the abject tool of a wretch like Buckingham, a mere "chessman," as he himself put it, in the hand of a monarch so weak and contemptible as James I. What is the explanation? Why this

strange mingling of mud and marble, of meanness and magnificence? Let Dean Church, who of all Bacon's critics has, perhaps, understood him best, answer: "There was," he says, "in Bacon's 'self' a deep and fatal flaw. *He was a pleaser of men.* There was in him that subtle fault, noted and named, both by religion and philosophy, in the ἄρεσκος of Aristotle, the ἀνθρωπάρεσκος of St. Paul, which is more common than it is pleasant to think even in good people, but which, if it becomes dominant in a character, is ruinous to truth and power." In all history is there any warning so tragic of the shipwreck that men suffer when they trim their sails to catch the favour of the many or the great?

From Francis Bacon let us turn to John Bright. At the time when the Corn Law agitation was at its height notwithstanding the "hurricanes of abuse" with which from some quarters he was assailed, Bright was perhaps

the most popular man within the four seas. He was the loved and trusted friend of the dumb, toiling millions whose wrongs he had voiced. Then came the calamitous strife with Russia in the Crimea, when the whole nation seemed drunk with the fury of war. Few have the courage to defend that war to-day, but in 1854 Bright stood almost alone in condemning it. Because of his opposition, men who had been his friends and allies turned against him; he was burnt in effigy; he was even spat upon in the streets of Manchester, and finally he was ousted from the seat which he had so long held in Parliament. But the sharpness of the trial only served to show the greatness of the man. This was how he spoke on the subject from his place in the House of Commons: "Let it not be said that I am alone in my condemnation of this war. And even if I were alone, if mine were a solitary voice, raised amid the din of

arms and the clamours of a venal press, I should have the consolation I have to-night—and which I trust will be mine to the last moment of my existence—the priceless consolation that no word of mine has tended to promote the squandering of my country's treasure, or the spilling of one single drop of my country's blood." And once again, in the disastrous internecine strife that threatened to rend in twain the United States, when, as Bright himself said, privilege every morning with blatant voice came into our streets and cursed the American Republic, and when it seemed as if Britain were about to be guilty of the folly and crime of recognising the Confederation of the South, he closed a speech to his own townsmen in Rochdale in these words: "As for me, I have but this to say: I am but one of this audience, and but one in the citizenship of this country, but if all other tongues are silent, mine shall

speak for that policy which gives hope to the bondsmen of the South, and which tends to generous thoughts and generous words and generous deeds between the two great nations who speak the English language and from their origin are alike entitled to the English name." Men never knew how truly great Bright was until he had to stand alone. And if to-day his name is written on high, if this and generations yet to be will keep his memory green, it is because, as Mr. Gladstone said in the House of Commons, he was always ready to lay his popularity as a sacrifice on the altar of his duty. He, too, might have said, "To me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment; he that judgeth me is the Lord." Wherefore let *us* likewise "make it our ambition" to be well pleasing unto Him.* And if so we can be well pleasing unto men,

* See 2 Cor. v. 9. (R.V., margin).

well; if not, well also: "He that judgeth us is the Lord."

But besides those of whom I have spoken, men like Francis Bacon whose first and last thought is how they may stand well with others, there are many who, though they have no place in such a category, are nevertheless influenced more than is meet by the judgment of others. These of whom I speak now could not, consciously at least, be deflected one hair's-breadth from that which they believe to be right by any unjust criticism of others, and yet by reason of a certain over-sensitiveness are made to suffer many things. Let some one put a wrong construction on what they do or say and it will cause them a sleepless night. I do not think I exaggerate a whit when I say that there are many amongst us who are enduring something like a perpetual martyrdom because they have not learned to estimate at their true worth the judgments

of others. One obvious moral of this I shall endeavour to point out in the next chapter; meanwhile, there are two things which we shall do well to remember.

The first cannot be better put than in the wise words of Thomas à Kempis: "What harm," he says, "can the words or injuries of any man do thee? He hurteth himself rather than thee." "Let not thy peace depend on the tongues of men, for *whether they judge well of thee or ill, thou art not on that account other than thyself*." We are what we are, and not what others think we are. Therefore, "when conscience testifieth of thy dutifulness and innocency, rest thy heart firmly on the Lord, and fear not the judgment of men."

The second point I wish to mention follows naturally from the first: let us learn to appeal from that court of human judgment which at best can only dispense a rough-and-ready

justice, to the judgment-seat of God: "He that judgeth me is the Lord." Mark the tense of the verb—present, not future; "judgeth," not "shall judge." Side by side, concurrently with the imperfect and fallible judgment of man, there goes on unerring and unresting the perfect judgment of God. There is in the Acts of the Apostles a very striking picture of a little scene in a court of justice in Palestine. The prisoner was St. Paul; standing round him like wild beasts hungry for their prey were his accusers, "bringing against him many and grievous charges." With one word he silenced them all — "Cæsarem appello!" "I appeal unto Cæsar." After that they had no more that they could do. And for us too our Cæsar sits upon the throne, and to Him may the daily appeal for judgment be made: "He that judgeth us is the Lord."

I have read somewhere of a young

musician listening to the first rendering of his first great composition. He stood up above the orchestra, and as he watched how the music which was the child of his own soul stirred and swayed the hearts of the listening multitude, a strange new emotion swept over his own heart; and yet through all he kept his eye fixed on one who sat there amidst the throng, the face of one who was a past master in the art in which he himself was but a beginner; and every change in the master's face meant more to him than all the thunders and plaudits of the crowd. That is how to live: "Let not thy peace depend on the tongues of men," but rather in thy heart turn thyself unto God and be not troubled by the judgments of others.

Thus far in what has been said I have assumed that in being misjudged by others evil is attributed to us of which we are innocent. But is that the only kind of misjudging? If men

sometimes think us worse than we are, do they not also sometimes think us better than we are? Are there not some of us who have never brought ourselves to stand before the tribunal of conscience or of God, until we have almost deceived ourselves into believing that the flattering verdict of man which is buzzed about us by a thousand tongues *is* the verdict of conscience and of God? What then? Why, what but this again that Thomas à Kempis says, "Whether men judge well of thee or ill, thou art not on that account other than thyself." We are what we are, and not what others think we are. Men may take our tinsel for gold; is it therefore gold and not tinsel? "He that judgeth us is the Lord," and all our sham and make-believe will never deceive Him. "Then," says the Apostle, when the Lord shall come, "then shall each man have his praise from God." But will that be our portion in that day when

He "will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart"—will it? Have we forgotten that tremendous scene in which the life of Herod hastened to its direful close, how that upon a set day the king arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto the people, so that the multitude shouted, saying, "The voice of a God and not of a man! the voice of a God and not of a man!" "*And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost!*" Are we preparing for ourselves a dread reversal of human judgment like that? Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Verily, it *is* a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. God help us that it be not the last great day before we find out how small a thing it is!

OUR JUDGMENT OF OTHERS

In speaking of human judgment in the previous chapter, it has been pointed out that though the field within which we ought to allow ourselves to be influenced by it must be strictly limited, nevertheless man's judgment of his fellows has a very necessary and important work to do in life. As the purpose of this chapter is to indicate still further restrictions of the sphere within which that judgment should work, it will be well first briefly to re-emphasise the fact just alluded to.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged," said our Lord; "Let us not judge one

another any more," said the Apostle Paul. Yet neither Paul nor Christ thereby declared the whole truth on the matter, the New Testament itself being witness. On this subject the Bible speaks—one may almost say must necessarily speak—with two voices. There are judgments which are the outcome of a narrow, critical, censorious spirit—judgments which, as one writer says, "we provoke ourselves to form and which are arbitrary and capricious;" and such judgments the New Testament smites with its sternest condemnation. But, on the other hand, there are judgments which, as the same writer goes on to say, "we cannot help forming, which are the voice of conscience and reason in us, which arise within us without our seeking them" —judgments, be it said, which if a man does not know how to form, he is not so much a saint as rather a simpleton; and such judgments the New Testament everywhere recognises and honours and

bids us seek wisely to exercise. Half a dozen passages of Scripture come to one's mind at once; thus, *e.g.*, St. Paul in speaking of the various manifestations of the Spirit says that while to one man is given the power to prophesy, and to another the power to speak with tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues, to another the gift of the Spirit means the "discernings of spirits,"* which is only another way of saying the power of judging. Similarly, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of those who "have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." So, again, in his first letter to the Church at Corinth, St. Paul distinctly enjoins upon its members that they shall both pass and execute judgment upon one of their own members who had lapsed into the grossest sensual sin, and then he adds, "Do not ye judge them that are within" —within the church, that is—"whereas

* 1 Cor. xii. 10.

them that are without God judgeth?" And finally, to take but one more example, writing to the Philippians the same Apostle says, "And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent." The conclusion from all this, and much more in the same strain that might have been quoted, is obvious: we are meant "to exercise our faculties of judging and to form an estimate of men and things and actions. The moral atmosphere cannot be kept pure and clean unless there is keen and fearless and, if necessary, unsparing judgment."* All this, I repeat, is self-evident, and though I have not attempted to trace the line of demarcation, every man's own conscience will enable him sharply to distinguish between judgments of this kind and those harsh, cruel, uncharitable judgments which Scripture

* Dean Church.

everywhere condemns, and which form the subject of this chapter.

And, in the first place, let us fix our thoughts for a moment on that vast mass of loose, offhand, irresponsible, often cruel and always unnecessary judging which exists on every hand, in the Church and the world and in relation to all the affairs of human life. Look, for example, at that black uncharitableness that is born, the ugly child of an ugly parent, of the party spirit in the public life of England to-day. There are men who write for our Press, who speak upon our public platforms, who sit in our municipal chambers, or who, in other less prominent ways, seek to guide the thinking of their fellow men, who, if we are to judge them by what they say, appear utterly incapable of attributing to those that differ from them one pure or generous motive, one high or unselfish purpose. Of course, those who aspire to lead us, whether it be in the political

or in the ecclesiastical world, must not be too thin-skinned, they must expect that their proposals or policies will be closely scrutinised and sometimes sharply condemned: this is reasonable and right; but has not the time more than come when men of all parties should set their faces like a flint against the detestable doctrine, which seems to be a kind of first principle with some journalists and politicians and even with some ecclesiastics, that every proposal or policy of the party opposite is the offspring of selfishness and duplicity?

Or take the history of religion, and is there any more pitiful sight under heaven than that which, alas! the whole history of Christendom presents to us of men—good men, Christian men—flinging back their hard judgments at one another, excommunicating and anathematising one another, thrusting one another down into the hottest hell? And why? Merely be-

cause the truth of God which has come to one man in this form has come to another in that. "Ah, think now," said old "Rabbi" Duncan once, as he discussed with a friend the inscrutable mystery of evil, "think now of the infinite God looking down all this time on our babblings in the dark!" Yes, but it is not these things — "our babblings in the dark"—our childish prattlings about what we do not half understand—that grieve Him; it is our judgments, our barbed and poisoned judgments, of them that differ from us, it is these things that hurt and wound God. For when we so sin against the brethren we sin against Christ.

And if we turn to the Christian Church of to-day, how little wiser even yet are we! Piety judges scholarship, thinking it violent and irreverent; scholarship judges piety, counting it timid and time-serving. The revivalist, with his flaming evangel, judges the

pastor; and the pastor, with his quieter and less pretentious methods, judges the evangelist. "Let no man judge you," said the Apostle, "in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day." Yet is it not this that we are doing every day —condemning others because their conscience will let them do what our conscience will not let us do, setting up that which is the law of our life as though it were the law of all men's lives? We judge one another's service, we judge one another's gifts, we judge one another's prayers even; judging, judging, judging—alas! it is what we are all doing and always doing.

There appeared a little time ago in the columns of the *British Weekly* a brief but very interesting correspondence between the late Professor Drummond and Mr. Sankey, the well-known musical colleague of Mr. Moody the evangelist. When Professor Drummond was accused of heresy, Mr.

Sankey wrote to him enclosing the following quotation from the "Programme of Christianity," and asked him if it did not represent and had not always represented his belief: "The power to set the heart right, to renew the springs of action, comes from Christ. The sense of the infinite worth of the single soul and the recoverableness of a man at his worst are the gifts of Christ. The freedom from guilt, the forgiveness of sins, come from Christ's cross; the hope of immortality springs from Christ's grave. Personal conversion means for life a personal religion, a personal trust in God, a personal debt to Christ, a personal dedication to His cause. These, brought about how you will, are supreme things to aim at, supreme losses if they are missed!" The following was Professor Drummond's reply, and I ask my readers especially to mark the sentences I have italicised:

"My dear Mr. Sankey,—

"Would that all calling themselves by the sacred name of Christian had your charity, knew the meaning as you and Mr. Moody do of 'judge not,' and afforded a man at least a frank trial before convicting him.

"These are my words, and there has never been an hour when the thoughts they represent were not among my deepest convictions. Nor, so far as I know, have I ever given any one ground to believe otherwise, nor is there any one of my writings where these same ideas will not be found either expressed or understood. If you ask me why I do not write whole books on these themes, I reply that I believe that one's only excuse for writing a book is that he has something to say that is not being said.

"These things are being said. Hundreds of books and millions of tracts are saying them afresh every month and year. I therefore feel no call to

enter literature on that ground. My message lies among the forgotten truths, the false emphasis, and the wrong accent. To every man his work.

"Let me thank you most heartily for your kindness in writing. *The way to spoil souls, to make them hard and bitter and revengeful, is to treat them as many treat me. If I have escaped this terrible fate it is because there are others, like yourself, who 'think no evil.'*

"*But tell your friends that they know not what they do, or what solemn interest they imperil, when they judge.*

"Yours very sincerely,

"HENRY DRUMMOND."

Do I need to go on? Is there one of us who will stop talking for a moment and listen to that interminable clatter of tongues that is going on all around us, and in which we are all taking our part, who will not be ready to exclaim with Dean Church, "*What* judging! What amazing and easy generalisations

from the slenderest facts! What recklessness of evidence! What ingenious constructions put on the simplest and most imaginary appearances! What defiant confidence and certainty, coupled with the grossest indifference to the actual truth and the grossest negligence to ascertain it! What superb facility in penetrating and divining hidden corruption of motives for unavowed ends!"

Think further of the pain of which this loose and random judging is the cause. "The great question of life," some one has said, "is the pain that we cause." If that be so, then there is a heavy day of reckoning coming for the man of uncharitable tongue. For of all mischief-makers in our poor grief-stricken world, he is among the very chief. I referred in the previous chapter to what some men suffer through the unjust judgments of others, and let us never forget it is all pain that need not have been, that might have been

avoided. Much of the pain of life is, I suppose, inevitable. There are blows that cannot be warded off. Sickness, disappointment, loss—do what we will, they find us out somehow. Death, like a ghostly visitant, enters despite our locked doors, and the chair is vacant, the cradle is empty; behold, our house is left unto us desolate. And as if all this were not enough, we must needs add sorrow to sorrow and multiply our sorrows tenfold by our bitter, heedless words; we must needs sting and stab one another with our rash and rancorous judgments. When we think of all this—of the pain of life that need not have been—is there one who will not join with the Apostle and say, "Therefore let us not judge one another any more"?

And now, if we be so minded, let me suggest one or two reasons that may serve to strengthen us in this resolve. And, in the first place, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." What does

that mean? "Judged" by whom? By God: that undoubtedly is the primary meaning. But it is not necessary, as a glance at the parallel passage in Luke's Gospel will show, to shut out the reference to man's judgment: "Judge not, that by other men ye be not judged." That is to say, if a man judge others in a harsh, critical spirit, he must not be surprised if society insists on turning the same standard against himself. "If," as one writer grimly puts it, "he chooses to fight with a tomahawk, he will be scalped some day, and the bystanders will not profusely lament." "As we deal with other men"—so Christ's words may be paraphrased—"so other men will deal with us. From all sides we get as we give. If we deal with men in the critical, censorious, narrow temper, men will deal so with us. If we make the best of others, others will make the best of us."* This may not be the

* Canon Gore's "Sermon on the Mount."

loftiest kind of argument, nevertheless it is true, it is Christ's, and it deserves to be kept in mind: judge not, that by other men ye be not judged.

But we must go deeper than this if we are to get to the root of the matter. No man is able justly to judge another because no man is able fully to understand another. With the very best possible intentions, we can never quite put ourselves at another's point of view and see things with his eyes. What Liberal has not at some time or other been puzzled and even half vexed because the arguments that so completely convince him utterly fail to convince his Conservative friend? And was there ever a Conservative who has not sometimes felt the same difficulty in regard to his Liberal neighbour? The shrewd, calculating, far-seeing, level-headed but slow-footed "practical man," as we call him, who always looks before he leaps, but by no means always leaps even when he has looked,

is always at a loss to understand the blustering earnestness, the "hot-headedness," as he thinks it, of the enthusiast. And the eager enthusiast, chafing at the world's long delays, cannot understand why, when the "practical man" is brought close up to some great evil of our life, the fierce fires of his indignation do not flame forth to consume it. Mary and Martha are always something of a puzzle to each other. Youth and old age are continually at cross-purposes; for youth does not know what it is to be old, and old age forgets what it is to be young. It is idle to complain that things are so; they are so because they must be so; they are so because we are what we are, human, limited, fallible. We must accept the facts as we find them, and—and this is the fact to be emphasised—when the temptation arises to judge and condemn another, we must check it with the question, "Who art *thou*—frail, fallible, limited man—who

art *thou* that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth."

Nor is this all. To our inability to see is to be added the further inability of others fully to reveal themselves. We all know what it is, when we have reached the furthest limit of self-explanation, to be conscious of much that still lies and must lie in the shadow. That wise and witty American writer, Oliver Wendell Holmes, says somewhere—I do not quote, I only paraphrase his words—that in every man there are three men. There is the man as the world sees him; there is the man as he sees himself; and there is the real man whom only God sees. Now the real man, whom only God sees, is always different from, and is often much better than, the man whom the world sees. After all, what is it that we see of another's life? A tiny strip, a mere hand's-breadth, and then —just as a tailor, with a little snip of

cloth between his fingers, will judge of a whole bale of cloth; just as a farmer, with a few grains of corn in the palm of his hand, will sample a whole sack of corn—so do we judge of men's lives. The folly, the injustice of it! I might as well cut out with my penknife a tiny square from the great canvas of a painter, and expect that from it I could understand all the meaning and mystery of the great artist's work. "God be thanked," says Browning,

> The meanest of His creatures
> Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
> One to show a woman when he loves her!

Remember, in every man there is a side you do not see, and sometimes it is the best side.

> Then gently scan your brother man,
> Still gentler, sister woman;
> Tho' they may gang a kennin' wrang,
> To step aside is human.
> One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving *Why* they do it;
> And just as lamely can ye mark
> How far, perhaps, they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
  Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
  Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let's be mute,
  We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
  But know not what's resisted.

"'Tis He alone decidedly can try us;" and because the day comes when He will try us, because, as the Apostle says, "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God," therefore, again, "let us not judge one another any more." "Judge nothing before the time," says the same Apostle in another place: what is the use of our little, hasty, temporary verdicts, since He is going to revise them and Himself to judge us all?

"Blessed are the merciful," so is it written, "for they shall obtain mercy"; but what, think ye, shall be the portion of the censorious and the unmerciful? I sometimes think that they to whom God will find it hardest to show mercy

(I speak after the manner of men) will be they who have sought to take the work of judgment out of His hands, and in all bitterness and malice have condemned their fellow men. Sure I am, at least, of this, that at the last, as one great writer beautifully says, it will not be our tenderness but our severity that we shall repent of.

Judge not, that by God ye be not judged; our judgings God will judge. And is there one amongst us who will not have upon his head, at that last great day, sins many enough and heavy enough and black enough to answer for, that he must needs add to them all this sin also? Therefore let us pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips;" and let us not judge one another any more.

OUR JUDGMENT OF OURSELVES

In the two previous chapters we have endeavoured to learn (1) our duty in relation to that vast mass of human judgment by which we are all surrounded; (2) by what means we may curb the tendency, so strong in all of us, to pass judgment upon the lives of others. Before we pass to the consideration of the divine judgment which will revise and supersede all the judgments of men, and which will be the subject of our next and closing chapter, let us pause for a moment to ask if there be not at least one direction in which the faculty of judging may exercise itself to wise purpose and to worthy

ends. I mean, of course, in relation to ourselves.

"Try your own selves," says the Apostle, "whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." "First," says Jesus, "cast out the beam out of thine own eye;" that is to say, let judgment begin at home. Then, and only then, can it have its perfect work: when it is turned against ourselves.

There are some amongst us who are gifted with a marvellously true and piercing insight into human character. They are able to divine the truth in regard to men and movements in the world around them, as by an unerring instinct, and they are rarely deceived. In the strange medley of life, where good and evil, the false and the true are so strangely interlaced, their eyes are quick to discern the things that differ. Where others can but slowly feel their way, as men blindfolded, they walk with open eyes and unfaltering feet. Now such a power is a

great and noble gift of God, and often as it is abused, base and ignoble as are the uses to which it is sometimes put, it may nevertheless accomplish a great and noble work. What is wanted is that every man should turn that faculty of judging, which in some is clear and flashing like the sweep of an electric searchlight and in others is but dim and faint, but which, bright or dim, burns in all—what is wanted, I say, is that every man should turn this faculty upon himself, and in its light should read his own life, and heart, and inmost self. "Let us," says Dean Church, "in examining our own spirits and motives, be the same clever, quick-sighted judges that we were when we judged of others." And this is the only kind of judging of which we can always be sure that only good will come of it. "In judging of others," says Thomas à Kempis, "a man laboureth in vain, often erreth, and easily sinneth; but in judging and

examining himself he always laboureth fruitfully." Let us, then, betake ourselves to a little of this "fruitful labour." I wish to suggest two or three reasons why, though we ought not to judge one another, we ought continually to be judging ourselves.

(1) A man must learn to judge himself and to place a wise reliance on that judgment, because only so is a settled and peaceful life possible to him. A sentence from one of St. Paul's letters will help to make my meaning plain: "Happy is he," he says, "that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth," or, as the last word might more literally be translated, "*in that which he finds good after examination;*" that is to say, if we may paraphrase the whole sentence, Happy is he who, having once determined in the sight and by the help of God the principles by which his life is to be ordered, refuses to allow himself to be disturbed either by fears and scruples

of his own or by those of other men. A man cannot always be examining his foundations at the call of every fussy and officious onlooker; he must learn to trust his own judgment and go on with his work. He cannot be for ever discussing either with himself or with others the principles by which he lives; he must live. We have seen in a previous chapter how, when St. Paul was beset by the adverse judgment of others, he made his appeal to the court of conscience: "With me it is a very small thing that I shall be judged of you or of men's judgment: *I know nothing against myself.*" Even that verdict is not final; there is, as we shall see presently, a higher court of appeal even than conscience. Nevertheless, if we are to appraise at their true worth the judgments of others, if our life is not to be like the surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed, we must learn to trust the verdict of our own conscience and to anchor

firmly by our own tried and proved convictions. And all this implies obviously a searching, a testing, a judging of one's self.

(2) Further, it is only those who are unsparing in their judgment of themselves, who can, with any right or reason, hope that they will be able to correct the failings of others. "First," says Jesus, "cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Removing a mote, the tiniest speck or splinter, from the eye of another, is always a delicate and difficult task; but if, to continue Christ's figure, there is a whole beam of wood jutting out from our own eye, the difficult task becomes an impossible one, for this reason, if for no other, that the patient declines the operation. The meaning of Christ's homely parable is obvious: only they who know themselves, their own sins and weaknesses, are able rightly to understand

others. There is a delicate tact and insight which comes of an honest and unsparing judgment of one's self. Speaking generally, the measure of our power to see into ourselves is the measure of our power to see into others, and if we would know how, as Paul somewhere says, to "reprove with long-suffering," to blend firmness with forbearance, in dealing with others, we must first have learned the lesson in dealing with ourselves. Therefore, if we are ambitious to mend another man's life, let us first of all practise assiduously on our own; otherwise, the work will only be bungled. Moreover, if men know that our sharpest eye is kept for ourselves they will welcome our judgments of them; but if they discover that conscience in us consists chiefly in "a keen eye for other men's sins," they will justly resent them. There is one bit of human nature which I have the opportunity of studying and of really coming

to know—*myself*. But if I do not know myself, if I am stoneblind to all my own defects, is it any wonder if, when I am eager to play the part of physician-in-ordinary to the world, the patient turns upon me with the retort, "Physician, heal thyself!" Your own sight may not be perfect, but you naturally decline to be operated on by a blind oculist. "*First* cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

(3) Again, "If we judged ourselves we should not be judged" (1 Cor. ii. 31). The immediate reference of the words, as a glance at the context will show, is to the judgments of God: "God's judgments are descending, but we may shun them by judging and testing ourselves."

The principle is one which admits of wide application. Every worker in the field of art and literature and science knows that he can only escape

the judgment and condemnation of his fellows by being his own severest critic. Tennyson's position in the world of letters to-day—to take but one example—is due in no small measure to the fact that he was always passing judgment on his own work. He had a marvellous power of getting outside himself and of judging his work from without. "He would not make his judgment blind." He saw and condemned the faults in his own workmanship as he would have seen and condemned them in the workmanship of another. And he has had his reward: he judged himself, he has not been judged. The same principle holds good when we come to the higher reaches of life and to man's relation to God. Did we but more diligently judge ourselves we should escape many of the just judgments both of men and of God, both here and hereafter. Read over again the familiar verses with which the fifty-first

Psalm opens: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." See how the Psalmist piles synonym on synonym to describe the evil of his own heart. It is "sin," "iniquity," "transgression," and it is all *his:* "*my* sin," "*my* transgression," "*my* iniquity." Do we ever get at close quarters with ourselves like that? We who are specialists in the sins and short-comings of others, who know all about the foibles and failings of our neighbours, do we ever scan our own features in the mirror of God's truth like that? Do we ever pass sentence and execute judgment upon ourselves after that fashion? O my soul, take

heed to thyself, examine thyself, dive deep down into thyself, and judge thyself, and it may be that so thou shalt escape the judgment of God!

But now let no man think the task of self-judgment a light and easy one. Rather is it a very difficult one, and if we are to make our self-judgment of any worth we shall need, as John Wesley used to say, to have all our wits about us. It may help us, perhaps, to name one or two of the difficulties in the way of an honest self-criticism.

And, to begin with, I suppose it is always difficult to see ourselves. A man's own face eludes him, so that he never gets a good look at it. We are are all more or less of a mystery to ourselves. "There are many hiding-places and recesses in the mind," says an ancient writer; and when we try to explore them we are soon bewildered and lost.

This is the initial difficulty, but it is by no means the only one. For when

a man tries to see his own face there are two other faces that are wont to slip in between him and himself. I quoted in a former chapter the saying of Oliver Wendell Holmes to the effect that in every man there are three men: the man the world sees, the man as he sees himself, and the real man whom only God sees. And when a man seeks to see himself he finds the face of the man whom the world sees continually coming in between him and his own face. And whenever it happens, as it does sometimes happen, that that is the comelier and pleasanter to behold, it is that and not the real face his eyes love to linger upon. And so, as I have said, we never get a good look at our own face at all. We live amid the praises and flatteries of our neighbours, seeing ourselves in mirrors that do not tell the whole truth about us; and though we know that the face in the mirror there is not our own, but a false face, nevertheless we persuade our-

selves otherwise and believe what we wish to believe. "He that slanders me," says Cowper, "paints me blacker than I am, and he that flatters me whiter. They both daub me, and when I look in the glass of conscience I see myself disguised by both." Are there not some of us who have looked so long at the figure daubed by flattery's cunning hand that we have come to believe that that is the real self, and to forget that the whitewash is only a disguise? "O wad some pow'r," we say sometimes, "the giftie gie us, to see oursels as others see us!" But that is the very thing some of us do not want. What we need, above all, is rather the power to see ourselves as God sees us and as we really are.

Another face which comes between us and ourselves is the face of our neighbour. And indeed we have no time to judge ourselves, so much is taken up in judging others. "He that diligently attendeth to himself," says

Thomas à Kempis, "can easily keep silence concerning other men." Undoubtedly; but he that diligently attendeth to other men, what about him? He has no time for himself, and self-scrutiny is impossible. When a man gets into the way of examining his neighbours' faults with a microscope, it will not be long, as some one has shrewdly observed, before he looks at his own through the wrong end of a telescope. It is very wonderful how small a speck in our neighbour's eye is sufficient to make us blind to how large a beam in our own eye. Nor is the reason far to seek. The Apostle came near to it, I think, when he wrote: "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things . . . and reckonest thou this, O man who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the

same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" We condemn others, and by implication pass favourable judgment upon ourselves. By a bit of subtle self-deception we come to think something the better of ourselves by reason of the very strictness and vehemence of our condemnation of others. Who has not detected, even in very little children, the accent of self-righteous Pharisaism in the tones in which another's faults are pointed out? But the classical example is to be found in the beautiful story of David and Nathan. When David had sinned against the Lord, "the Lord sent Nathan unto David." And he came unto him and said unto him: "There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished up, and it grew up together with him, and with his children.

It did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him." And as David listened his heart grew hot with indignation within him, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." And after that, I do not doubt, if the prophet had but given him time, the guilty king would have felt himself a better man. Was it possible, indeed, that he who could so denounce the wrong-doing of another could be himself so great a sinner? It is the old, old story; we are all ready to

Compound for sins we are inclined to
By damning those we have no mind to.

But, be the difficulties what they may—and I have only briefly indicated one or two of them—see ourselves, examine ourselves, judge ourselves we must. I do not mean that we are to be always sitting in front of a glass, our finger on our pulse, or our hand on our heart, watching the colour in our cheeks come and go; men do not grow healthy in that way, physically or spiritually. But overmuch self-examination is the peril of but few nowadays. The danger is rather that we never give heed to ourselves at all. Our minds are filled with a thousand cares; but that which should be a man's supreme care, the care of himself, is to most of us no care at all.

Self-judgment is necessary, but self-judgment is not final. "I know nothing against myself," said the Apostle. What then? "I am not hereby justified; He that judgeth me

is the Lord." Do not be satisfied even with the verdict of conscience, until He has set His seal to it and ratified it. Let us judge ourselves, and then let us take ourselves and our self-judgments into His presence for final judgment. It is always well, as a great preacher has told us, even when conscience says, "You may do it," still to go to Jesus Christ and to say, "May I? May I?" "Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me."

I have only one other word to add. Some there are who judge themselves unjustly, who deal too harshly with themselves—tender, sensitive spirits, vexed by scruples and fears, whose own hearts do every day condemn them and give them no rest. Again and again have I met with such, holy souls dwelling in the very light of God, to whom that light was yet but as utter darkness. I learned of one such but the other day. For years the

shadow never lifted from her life, and even at the last crossing it still lay upon her heart, heavy and dark. Was it not for these that the Apostle John wrote, "We shall assure our heart before Him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us; because God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things"? It is not a word for us all; but it may be that some will read these lines whose hearts have grieved over loved ones, dear to them and dear to God, to whom no assurance was ever granted to gild the darkness of their night. Then shall we not comfort one another with these words: "God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things"? And He will reverse the heart's unjust judgments of itself in that day when He will bring to light the counsels of the heart, and every man shall receive his praise from God.

GOD'S JUDGMENT OF US ALL

EACH of the foregoing chapters leads up naturally to the subject of the present one. Let us not fear the judgments of others, for "He that judgeth us is the Lord;" let us not judge one another any more, for "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God;" rather let us judge ourselves, that in that last great day we be not judged. It is of that final judgment which is God's and not man's that we have to think now.

There is very much concerning that judgment which God has not revealed, and which, therefore, man cannot know. "We believe that Christ shall come to

be our Judge." But when He will come, what will be the manner of His coming, no man knoweth and it is vain to speculate. Artists, whether of the pen or the brush, who have turned the poetry of certain passages of Scripture into prose, and sought to describe for us the wholly unimaginable scenes of that Great Day of God, have vulgarised rather than heightened our conceptions of its surpassing glory. The subject is too tremendous for the imagination to toy with it, and to trick it out with rhetoric's tawdry frippery is but to rob it of the solemn impressiveness with which every writer of the New Testament thinks of it himself, and would fain lead us to think of it also. At the same time, though it is at our peril that we forget the limitations of our knowledge, there are certain broad principles and general truths concerning the Last Judgment which Scripture clearly reveals and on which we may profitably meditate.

And, first of all, let us get it firmly fixed in our minds that however we may differ as to the exact authority to be attributed to different parts of Holy Scripture, yet if it is *in any sense at all* an authoritative revelation to us of the will of God, the coming judgment of the world is a solemn reality. Of course there is a sense in which God is always judging the world here and now—our words as we speak them, our deeds as we perform them, our thoughts as we think them. But on no system of interpretation whatever is it possible to accept this as exhausting the meaning of the language of Scripture. So again we speak sometimes, as does the Bible itself, with a certain vague indefiniteness, of divine judgments descending upon men and nations; but, important as is the truth which such sayings suggest, it is something above and beyond all this to which everywhere the New Testament bears solemn and unvarying witness.

"And as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come"—no, that is not precisely what Luke wrote. Read the verse again in the Revised Version: "Paul reasoned of . . . *the* judgment to come." It was no misty idea of a coming judgment that floated dimly through the speaker's mind; he thought of "that day" when the books will be opened and God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. And to this bear all the Scriptures witness.

I might turn to the Old Testament and point to those many anticipations of the "day of the Lord" to be found so often in the writings of the prophets, or to such foregleams of New Testament truth as the cry of the Psalmist, "He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth": or to the warning of the writer of Ecclesiastes: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer

thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." But in all this, it may perhaps be said, we hear the voice of man's conscience, the cry of man's heart, rather than the clear authoritative word of revelation. Then let us open the New Testament, and immediately the truth rises before us in sharpest and most unmistakable distinctness. He who when He was here amongst men refused to judge, who said that He came into the world not to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, nevertheless declared that the Father "gave Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man." "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory"—they are His own words—"and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all

the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." And if from the words of Jesus we turn to the records of the early Christian Church, to the Acts of the Apostles and the various Epistles that follow, the result is the same. "It would be impossible," says Dr. Denney, "to over-estimate the power of this final judgment as a motive in the primitive Church." When Peter went to expound the Gospel for the first time to a Roman centurion, this was how he summed up the sacred commission given to him and the other disciples: "He charged us to preach unto the people and to testify that this is He which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." When Paul proclaimed the Gospel in Athens an essential part of his message was this: "God hath appointed a day

in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." It is surely needless to multiply quotations. The judgment-seat of Christ was the background of all the Apostles' thinking; they lived their life and did their work as men who must give account; they could not, they dared not, forget the open books and the great white throne. "We need lay no stress," says Dr. Denney again, "on the scenery of New Testament prophecy, but if we are to retain any relation to the New Testament at all we must assert the personal return of Christ as Judge of all."

So much, then, for the witness of Scripture. But now, what is involved in all this? What does it mean for us? Let us seek to answer the question with the open Bible before us.

A Day of Judgment means that once

at least we shall be judged perfectly, that all things will be seen as they really are. Here and now we hide ourselves from one another; often we hide ourselves from ourselves; as Mozley * truly says, "People have understandings with themselves here." But then all disguises will drop off, the heart's counsels will be made manifest, the life's long-kept secrets revealed. "The day" will not determine what we are —we shall have done that already—it will declare it. "All things are naked and laid open"—no words of man are half so impressive as the severe simplicity of the language of the New Testament—"before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." "We must all appear"—no, that is not the right word; look once more at the Revised Version —"we must all *be made manifest* before the judgment-seat of Christ."

* See a remarkable sermon, "The Reversal of Human Judgment," by Canon Mozley, in his "University Sermons."

It is not for us to anticipate the disclosures of that day, yet it is certain, for Christ Himself has told us, that the perfect judgment of God will mean the reversal of many of the most confident judgments of man. On the curtain which hangs down before the judgment-seat Scripture has inscribed this solemn sentence: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." In one of the letters of the late Dean Church, written not long before his death, there is a sublime figure not unworthy, as Mr. John Morley says, of the Dante whom its author so much loved and so well understood: "I often have a kind of waking dream," he wrote: "up one road, the image of a man decked and adorned as if for a triumph, carried up by rejoicing and exulting friends, who praise his goodness and achievements; and on the other road, turned back to back to it, there is the very man himself, in sordid and squalid apparel, surrounded

not by friends, but by ministers of justice, and going on, while his friends are exulting, to his certain and perhaps awful judgment."

Yes, Capernaum may be exalted to heaven by privilege, and yet at the last cast down into hell. Let us remember, not indeed that we may pronounce judgment upon others, but rather that we may take the more diligent heed to ourselves, that many of this world's most confident judgments will be reversed and many high heads laid low in that day when God will render to every man according to his works.

And then, further, that judgment which will mean the reversal of many of our judgments will be itself final and irreversible. What may happen between death and the judgment we know not. That which theologians call the intermediate state lies for the most part in shadow, and, save for a few fitful and uncertain gleams, the New Testament itself leaves the dark-

ness unbroken. But all Scripture agrees in representing the judgment of the great day as final. Of any change, of any revision beyond that it gives no hint, it holds out no hope. Indeed, may we not almost say that in the nature of things it must be final, for it is the judgment of perfect wisdom and perfect love?

"We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God"; but just as "all men think all men mortal but themselves," so the thought of a general judgment touches no man until the blunt generality is sharpened to this fine and penetrating point: "*I* shall stand before the judgment-seat of God." Yes, *I* am to be judged; *I* am to stand before the Son of Man; the light of that pure Presence is to be turned on *my* life, and all its deeds and inmost purposes, whether they be good or whether they be evil, are to be made manifest. Judgment is no more to be escaped than is death, its great fore-

runner: "Every eye shall see Him." "Each man's work"—no book in all the world is so individual, so personal as the New Testament—"each man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it;" "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Seeing, then, that we look for these things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness? If these things are so, can it be well to act as though they were not? Ought they not to make a difference, and a great difference, to us all? "If these things are so"—but who denies that there is to be a day of judgment? Rather let us ask who believes it—believes it, I mean, as the Apostle Paul who lived all his days in the sight and in the thought of it? Some of us there are, indeed, who believe it; and I will tell you how we show our faith: by idle speculations about what no man knows—the future of the heathen, the judgment of those

who died never having heard of Christ. But search Paul's Epistles through, and you shall find no anxiety on that matter. When the Apostle thinks of the judgment-seat of Christ it is to remind himself that he must appear there and to pray that at the last he may be found faithful. Therefore, again I say, if this indeed be a truth of God, ought we not to make more room for it in our life? "There was never a time," says a great modern theologian, "when it was safe for the Church to forget the judgment to come"; and is not this that is true of the Church true also of the individual? We all know how strong are the tendencies to-day which make for the weakening of the sense of moral responsibility. What is wanted is something that will bind a man to his own life, that will invest life for him with a new seriousness and a new dignity, the seriousness and dignity that really belong to it. And is there anything that will do this like

the thought, "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God"? We know what a sense of accountability will do in other walks of life. The student at the university, the manager of some great business concern, the public servant busy with the affairs of the municipality or the State are all both supported and stimulated by the thought that the eyes of others are upon them, to whom by-and-by they must give account. And for many of us life would become a new thing if more often we reminded ourselves of that day when, as Tennyson says, "Each shall stand full face with all he did below." Do not misunderstand: God does not want to fling a cold shadow across the joyfulness of our life. He would not have the thought of judgment to haunt us like some grim spectre that will not be put by. No, but if we are wise shall we not sometimes stop and ask ourselves: This .nat I am doing, how shall I think

about it then? how will it look in the light of the great white throne? I remember as a child—if I may be allowed an illustration so homely—seeing my mother examine a piece of cloth or dress fabric in the evening under the gaslight, and then she would say, "Wait until the morning, till we see how it looks by daylight." Let us take heed we are not deceived by how things look in the glare and glitter of the lamps of time; let us resolve to see them in the clear steady radiance of eternity.

There is a very remarkable phrase in St. John's First Epistle in which he speaks of having "boldness in the day of judgment." How is it possible? Fear, shrinking—that we could understand; but boldness! When God sets our iniquities before Him, our secret sins in the light of His countenance, we may call upon the mountains and rocks to fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him that sitteth upon the throne; but how shall

mortal man be "bold" in the presence of his Judge? The phrase was born of the experience of the saints. The men who used it were they who, as they stood in the presence of death and thought of all that lay beyond death, yet knew no fear, for they had learned to love and to look for the appearing of Him who was to be their "righteous Judge" and at whose hands they would receive at last the crown of righteousness.

Would we know the secret of this holy boldness? Then let us remember that, if there is much to fear at the hands of Perfect Goodness, there is more to hope. Sinful man is a sterner judge than the righteous God. None can "make allowance for us all" as He both can and will who looks upon us "with larger, other eyes than ours." Faber is right:

> There is no place where earth's sorrows
> Are more felt than up in heaven;
> There is no place where earth's failings
> Have such kindly judgment given.

Moreover, is it not much to know that our Judge will be Jesus Christ Himself? We shall "stand before the *Son of Man*," before Him who knoweth our infirmities, for Himself hath borne them, before Him who still bears the human nature that once He made His own. And we may make our Judge our friend. "Inasmuch as God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness," therefore does He "command men that they should all everywhere repent." Let us turn from our sins; let us flee to Christ; and in the day when the tempest of judgment hurtles through the air we shall be safe. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Lo! from sin and grief and shame,
I hide me, Jesus, in Thy name.

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